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Religion Scholar Discusses Homosexuality and the Bible at UNH in November

By [Erika Mantz](#)
UNH News Bureau
603-862-1567

October 23, 2001

DURHAM, N.H. -- Saul Olyan, Dorot Professor of Judaic Studies and professor of religious studies at Brown University, will present a lecture on "Homosexuality and the Bible: The Book of Leviticus and Restrictions of Male Homoerotic Acts in Historical Context," Tuesday, Nov. 6, at 7 p.m. in the Memorial Union Building, room 334-336.

The lecture is presented by UNH's Religious Studies Program, with the Center for Humanities and the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs.

Olyan specializes in the religious practices and beliefs of ancient Israel. He is the author of three books and numerous articles on topics like angels, goddess-veneration, and purity laws in the earliest stages of the people of the Bible.

In his lecture, Olyan will address the classic passages in the Bible regarding homoeroticism: Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, and Genesis 19. While most people assume these texts prohibit all homoerotic acts and reflect a general abhorrence for homosexuality in ancient Israelite and other West Asian societies, Olyan says they are not that clear. If they are read in light of ancient social and religious history rather than with modern prejudices, the texts are quite restricted in what they prohibit, he says. And, the authors of the texts belonged to particular ideological currents² in ancient Israelite culture, and were not representative of popular moral attitudes.

For more information on the lecture, call David Frankfurter, director of UNH's Religious Studies

Program, at (603) 862-3015. For directions, visit
<http://www.unhmub.com/infocenter/directions.html>

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